

FAQ's

Congregate Nutrition Program

Question: What information is needed for individuals (other than participants) who provide volunteer services during the meal hours and whose congregate meal may be counted as an eligible meal for reimbursement?

Answer: As of March 2001, the UAI is no longer required for these volunteers. The individual may volunteer at the congregate site or deliver meals to homebound persons. A congregate meal site member or participant who volunteers at the site is not considered a volunteer under this definition.

To be counted as an eligible meal, the volunteer's full legal name and service units must be entered into AIM; it may be helpful to also enter their Social Security number or AIM generated number which makes it easier to ensure an unduplicated count.

In addition, the AAA shall establish procedures for offering a meal, on the same basis as meals are provided to participating older individuals, to volunteers and other eligible individuals.

Question: What information is needed for non-routine meals so they may be counted as an eligible meal for reimbursement?

Answer: A non-routine eligible meal is an eligible meal served at an agency-sponsored event, which is not part of the regular congregate meal program. To be considered eligible, Part A of the Universal Assessment Instrument (UAI) and "Determine Your Nutritional Health" Nutritional Screening are required.

Question: Do we have to accept Food Stamps in our nutrition programs?

Answer: No, the AAA or service provider is not required to accept food stamps or participate in the new electronic program. The AAA or service provider may wish to encourage the senior to use the food stamps to purchase food to consume at home.

Eligible clients may use paper food stamps to make meal donations in lieu of cash, until paper food stamps are phased out and replaced with the electronic version. If a client wishes to use food stamps, the AAA or provider must assure that all federal, state, and local agency provisions relating to their use and handling are met.

The AAA or service provider must assist clients in taking advantage of benefits available under the Food Stamp Program, however.

Question: Do we have to provide special diets?

Answer: The Older Americans Act Amended 2000 states that meals shall be adjusted, to the maximum extent practicable; to meet any special dietary needs of participants, such as health or religious requirements.

One AAA in particular is not able, at this time, to provide special diets for persons with medical conditions. A letter is sent to the physician with information about the type of diet that can be provided, and the physician determines whether or not the client can receive nutrition services.

Question: How will the new Virginia Department of Health Food Regulations affect AAA nutrition programs?

Answer: There are significant changes that will affect nutrition programs. Potentially cold foods shall now be maintained at or below 41 degrees F throughout the period of meal service. Cooked fruits and vegetables shall be maintained at 140 degrees F. The new regulations also emphasize health and hygiene of all individuals involved with meal preparation and serving.

We have tried to incorporate applicable parts of the new regulations into the Congregate and Home Delivered Nutrition Program Service Standards. AAA and service providers are encouraged to review the new food regulations under the link on this web page. Central kitchens and other food preparation sites inspected by Virginia Department of Health will be affected the most.